

**Department of Energy**

Golden Field Office
1617 Cole Boulevard
Golden, Colorado 80401-3393

January 13, 2009

DOE/EA 1622

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
for the
PROPOSED SOLAR TECHNOLOGY CENTER
BOULDER CITY, NEVADA**

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy, Golden Field Office

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), in coordination with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Research Foundation, conducted an Environmental Assessment (Final EA) that analyzed the potential impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed Solar Technology Center (STC) in the Eldorado Valley of Boulder City, Nevada. DOE, through its Golden Field Office, will provide Congressionally directed funding to the UNLV Research Foundation to support the construction and initial operation of the STC. All discussion, analysis, and findings related to the potential impacts of constructing and operating the proposed STC, including the applicant-committed environmental protection measures, are documented in the Final EA. The Final EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

The proposed STC would include a field station with a parking lot and two test areas on approximately 10 acres of a site leased from the City of Boulder City, Nevada. The field station would include classroom and work space, research laboratory, reception area, storage area, and washroom facilities. The reception area would include space for educational information and information on the various research projects. The outside test areas will include testing areas for technologies such as photovoltaic panels, parabolic trough collectors, and solar dishes. The STC would be enclosed by a chain-link fence, utilities (water, sewer, and telecommunications) would be installed, and a temporary generator would be used until power is produced at the site. The UNLV Center for Energy Research would manage the tasks for each research project at the STC. University students will have opportunities to receive hands-on experience and work with industry partners in conducting research and in developing renewable energy technologies.

In accordance with applicable regulations and policies, DOE sent scoping notices to potentially interested federal, state, and local agencies, tribal government representatives, elected officials, businesses, organizations and special interest groups, and published a public notice in the local newspaper. The scoping notice directed the recipients to DOE's public reading room website to

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read a scoping letter that described the Proposed Action and requested assistance in identifying potential issues that could be evaluated in the EA. In response to the scoping letter, DOE received comments from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), Nevada Division of State Lands, and Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The agencies did not object to the project, but raised general concerns about federal and state protected wildlife, migratory birds, water usage, and visual impacts.

DOE sent notices announcing the availability of the Draft EA for public comment and consulted separately with USFWS, SHPO, and Native American tribes. During the public review period for the draft document SHPO, NDOW and the Nevada Department of Air Quality and Environmental Management (DAQEM) submitted written comments. NDOW responded and concurred with DOE's assessment of impact to wildlife resources. SHPO concurred with the determination that no historic properties of a religious and cultural nature could be affected by the undertaking. Comments were received from the Nevada Department of Air Quality and Environmental Management regarding air quality permitting and Section 7 and 10 consultations with the USFWS. Comments from all parties are addressed in the Final EA.

DETERMINATION: DOE determines that providing funding to support the construction and initial operation of the proposed STC near Boulder City, Nevada, would not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The applicant-committed environmental protection measures identified in the Final EA shall be incorporated and enforceable through DOE's funding award to the UNLV Research Foundation. These measures include the requirement to obtain and comply with dust control and construction stormwater discharge permits; implement best management practices during construction to minimize ground disturbance and impacts to migratory birds and protected wildlife species; implement operational practices to protect the health and safety of workers, students, and the public; and pay remuneration fees for desert tortoise mitigation.

The preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required and DOE is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact.

Copies of the Final EA are available at the DOE Golden Field Office Public Reading Room website at http://www.eere.energy.gov/golden/reading_room.aspx or from:

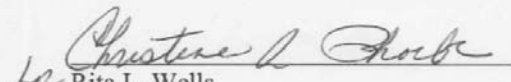
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For further information on the DOE NEPA process contact:

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Issued in Golden, Colorado this 13th day of JANUARY, 2009.


for Rita L. Wells
Executive Director for Field Operations